



## CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

*A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families*

# Child Poverty in Washington

- 16% (approximately 226,000) of Washington's children under 18 live below the federal poverty level. The 226,000 children living in poverty would form a continuous line along the entire length of I-5 in Washington. A person driving from the Canadian border to the Oregon border would pass a child every six feet or 816 children every mile.  
*- American Community Survey, 2006 and Washington Kids Count, 2009*
- Poverty falls more heavily on children of some races/ethnicities. The poverty rate for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander children in Washington State is 39%, for black children is 34%, for American Indian/Alaska Native children is 32%, and for Hispanic children is 30%. Both white and Asian children have a poverty rate of 10%.  
*- Washington Kids Count, 2009*
- The national poverty level for a family of four is \$21,200/year. The poverty level is set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is the same for a family in Seattle as it is for a family in Wapato.  
*- US Department of Health and Human Services, 2008*
- In Washington two-thirds of families living in poverty have a head of household who is employed.  
*- Washington Kids Count, 2009*
- Just five percent of married couples live in poverty compared to 34 percent of families headed by single women and 15 percent of families headed by single men. Single mothers with very young children are the most at risk. Forty-two percent of single mothers with children under five are living below the poverty line.  
*- Washington Kids Count, 2009*
- Children in immigrant families experience poverty at higher rates than those who are native born. Twelve percent of children living with native born parents are living in poverty compared to 22 percent of children living with a parent who is foreign born  
*- Washington Kids Count, 2009*
- While poverty is concentrated in densely populated urban areas, rural children are disproportionately affected by poverty. Twenty-one percent of rural children in Washington live in poverty compared to 13 percent of urban children. Okanagan, Ferry, and Yakima counties— all rural – have the highest poverty rates, while urban counties such as Snohomish, Kitsap, and King experience child poverty rates below the state average.  
*- Washington Kids Count, 2009*
- Being raised in poverty places children at higher risk for a wide range of problems. Research indicates that poor children are disproportionately exposed to risk factors that may impair brain development and affect social and emotional development.  
*- Child Trends Data Book, 2006*